

Will Say

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Strategic Commander overseeing OPP uniform deployments for Ottawa Convoy Demonstrations

This will say represents a high level overview or executive summary of my assignment covering January 24th 2022 to February 27th, 2022.

- On January 24th 2022 at 1622 hrs. I received an email from OPP East Region Commander, Chief Superintendent Karl Thomas asking if I would accept an assignment as the Strategic Commander overseeing the OPP response to the numerous vehicle convoys that were heading towards the City of Ottawa. I accepted the assignment and proceeded to form a team to address the incoming convoys. Our East Region Emergency Operations Centre was stood up and an Incident Commander was put in place and was asked to author an Operations Plan to deal with the incoming vehicles and ensure that the OPP's Provincial Highway Blockade Strategy was a part of that plan. This plan was primarily a traffic management plan to ensure the safe movement of these vehicles across the 400 series highways leading to Ottawa. A Critical Incident Commander (CIC) was placed in the National Capital Region Command Centre (NCRCC) as all police partners along with the Ottawa Police Service Incident Commanders (IC) would be working from there.
- On January 25th 2002 at 2140 hrs I was advised via email from Chief Thomas that the West Convoy had entered Ontario at 2030 hrs. with approx. 830 vehicles.
- On January 27th 2022 at 0930 hrs I participated in a tele-conference with the Law Enforcement partners from INTERSECT. The Ottawa Police Service representatives on the call detailed what their traffic management plans were for this event. They advised that their plan allows for 3,000 vehicles to be within the City of Ottawa. They detailed where they wanted the vehicles to exit off of the 417 Highway and advised that were allowing the trucks to park on various streets in the downtown core. They advised that they would allow the trucks to park in three of the four lanes of Wellington Street and the Convoy leaders agreed to keep one lane open for emergency vehicles. They also agreed to park in the curb lanes of other streets in order to allow emergency vehicle access.

- On January 27th 2022 at 2119 hrs I was advised by OPP POU Commander, A/Supt. Mike Francis, that the OPP would be providing two POU sections. Their primary deployment would be to support the Parliamentary Protective Services on Parliament Hill and secondary to support the Ottawa Police Service.
- On January 29th 2022 the convoy vehicles began making their way into the City of Ottawa. The convoys did not block any 400 series roadways and made their way into Ottawa without any major traffic disruptions on OPP policed roadways.
- It became clear on January 29th 2022 that many of the convoy participants had plans to stay for a prolonged period of time and the convoy had attracted thousands to the downtown core. I advised my team to begin planning for a protracted event and begin to call in the required logistical resources to sustain our posture.
- At 1540 hrs on January 29th 2022 I spoke with OPP CIC Insp. Dawn Ferguson who was in the NCRCC. She advised the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) Incident Commander was cursing and the other OPS members were in panic and crisis mode and were barking orders at each other and at partner agencies. This event was clearly beyond their capabilities. Insp. Ferguson offered OPP POU and rapid deployment of OPP QRT units if Ottawa had any major calls within the City but those offers were ignored. I connected with OPS Deputy Chief Steve Bell and offered OPP supports and advised that I had 18 officers available for immediate deployment and he advised that he would pass that on to his Incident Commanders. At 1900 hrs we made another offer of assistance and OPS advised it was not needed.
- At 1130 hrs on January 30th 2022 I was advised by OPP CIC Insp. Luc Duval that a request for assistance from the OPS was forthcoming. The OPS wanted 18 officers immediately to assist with traffic controls. Two officers per cruiser at intersections. A further ask for resources was expected. At 1800 hrs I was advised by OPP CIC Insp. Ferguson that she was facing further dysfunction and lack of communication within the OPS. OPS asked for 10 OPP officers at 1400 hrs and they were sent to OPS HQ. Since that time only two OPP members had been deployed and eight were still sitting at OPS HQ. I advised Ferguson to remove the eight officers as they were dayshift members and not fair to them to keep them waiting there. I contacted OPS Deputy Chief Steve Bell to advise him of this issue. Deputy Bell apologized and felt there was a disconnect with how the OPS was accessing OPP members and getting them deployed. He advised he would rectify the issue.
- On January 31st 2022 we began providing 30 OPP members per day to assist OPS with traffic point duties. On an INTERSECT call, OPS Deputy Chief Steve Bell advised that the OPS was going to begin planning for this event to be protracted so were looking at a four week sustainability plan and will need substantial assistance from police partners.

At this early stage it was very clear that there were issues with command and control of this event within the OPS. They had no integrated command structure. They had members based at the NCRCC, at OPS HQ and at their Greenbank Road location. Many times their Incident Commander in the NCRCC were unaware of direction that was given by the OPS Major Incident Commander, Supt. Marc Patterson, who was at their Greenbank location. There was no proper sharing of information and members of the OPS seemed unwilling to fully integrate the OPP into their plans. There were continued asks for additional OPP members and we provided them but began finding out that on night shifts we would have thirty officers on the ground in the downtown core and the OPS had eight. I connected with OPS Deputy Bell on the lack of OPS members working and he advised that he would work on it and that they were struggling with members calling in sick. This issue did get better as the days progressed and we began seeing more OPS members deployed to the downtown core.

- On February 2nd 2022 it was clear that this event was no longer a traffic related event and the OPP would be invested in operations for an extended period. As a result, I directed that the ERHQ EOC be stood down and an OPP Command Post be stood up within the City of Ottawa. On this date, the OPP received the official ask for resources from Chief Sloly of the OPS. They requested 60 OPP uniform members per day along with PLT and POU supports and dispatching support. The OPP also provided members to assist with forming plans of action. OPP Insp. Younan and S/Sgt Gauvin were assigned this task.
- On February 3rd 2022 I was contacted by OPP Supt. Dan Alakas who advised there was confusion and disorganization with the OPS planning group. There was a lack of clarity on what they were being asked to do by OPS Chief Sloly. There were issues as well with the integration of PLT. PLT had no mandate, no reporting structure and no guidance on how best to integrate into OPS operations. There was no real plan of operations forthcoming and no meaningful dialogue was occurring with the Convoy participants. The OPS PLT were not being given any autonomy or ability to make decisions on the ground and any decision had to be vetted through Chief Sloly. Chief Sloly was acting as the defacto MCIC for the event.
- On February 4th 2022 I spoke with OPS Deputy Bell about the lack of a plan and a unified command structure again and he advised that he recognized the need to formalize operations and they were trying their best to achieve that. Despite these assurances it was clear that the issues persisted. At the daily press conference this date, Chief Sloly indicated that they had new intelligence information so they planned to shut down every off ramp and bridge leading into Ottawa. This was not communicated to the OPP. I spoke to OPS Deputy Bell and he advised that despite what his Chief stated, there was no new information and there were no plans to close all the off ramps or bridges. The OPS Incident Commander in the NCRCC also had no idea of plans to do this and it resulted in

conflict amongst the OPS command members about lack of communications on plans. On this same date I received a call from the OPP members on the integrated planning group. They advised that an OPS Insp. Morand attended their meetings and told them to scrap all their work and try to come up with something different. This was confusing to the group and they asked if he had the authority to ask for such a change and he claimed that he did. The OPP members advised they were not comfortable with that direction so left the table and contacted myself and were seeking my assistance to de-conflict the issues. I contacted OPS Deputy Chief Bell and he advised that Insp. Morand had no authority to make changes and that the planning group should be reporting to OPS Supt. Dunlop and the three options they were asked to author plans for were still on the table.

- On February 5th 2022 I was advised by OPP CIC Insp. Ferguson that the OPS partners were stating that OPS Chief Sloly was on a rampage and making unrealistic demands of them and also the partner agencies. He wanted all roads, bridges and off ramps closed as early and for as long as possible and wanted partner agencies to assist with the clearing of intersections downtown. He was trying to direct OPP resources and I advised Insp. Ferguson that any changes to OPP posture on the ground must come through myself and the OPP POU Commanders. There were serious concerns that there was no measured approach being applied to operations with no meaningful PLT communication between police and the convoy organizers.
- On February 6th 2022 I continued to have conversations with OPP PLT about the lack of a plan and no integrated approach happening with PLT. PLT had sent the OPS Major Incident Commander (MIC), Supt. Patterson an eight page summary of suggested approaches and what a path forward to resolution might look like. I connected again with OPS Deputy Bell to try and re-inforce the need for a measured approach and to allow PLT to get engaged and allow them some autonomy to make decisions and work towards some form of de-mobilization with the convoy participants as the OPS PLT Co-ordinator, S/Sgt John Ferguson, was not letting them do that as Ferguson advised that his command did not support it. This all culminated in an incident at the Coventry Road fuel depot. PLT were asked by the OPS MIC to attend there and see if they could negotiate the removal of fuel from the site. OPS PLT along with OPP PLT members attended with OPP and OPS POU back up and they were successful in negotiating to have fuel moved. Unbeknownst to PLT, the OPS MIC had planned to arrest the parties when they left the fuel site. Once away from the fuel site, the protesters were stopped and arrested for Mischief offences. This action had an immediate and severe negative impact on the trusting relationships PLT were trying to form with the convoy participants and led to the OPS PLT unit telling OPP PLT they should leave the operation as they felt the PLT program had suffered irreparable damage.

- [REDACTED]

- On February 8th 2002 I participated in a call with OPP Command where it was announced that an Integrated Resource Planning Team was being established and would be headed by Chief Superintendent Carson Pardy. We were provided a Mission and objectives and I was asked to assist Chief Pardy as I had been the lone senior OPP member on the ground in Ottawa since the beginning of the Convoy's entry to the City. That evening I attended a meeting with the Integrated Planning Team at RCMP National Headquarters. We received a presentation from OPS A/Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson which consisted of an overview of what could best be described as a desired plan of action. A/Deputy Ferguson advised that an operations plan, including the PLT plan, was completed or was nearing completion and we should have it later that evening. She indicated that negotiations/PLT is their first of a seven point Concept of Operations strategy however she advised that there have been some let downs/disappointments.
- On February 9th 2022 I was advised that the OPS Operational Plan was not completed yet and the Integrated Planning Team was being invited to OPS HQ later that day to meet with the OPS Executive Team and be provided the plan. Later that day we attended OPS HQ. We were presented with a Concept of Operations which was not a true operational plan as I was familiar with seeing and three single sheets of paper which detailed the partner agency support they were asking for. Chief Sloly was asking for 1,800 members to assist but the request was not broken down as to how they planned to use those resources or when. After being presented with these items, Chief Sloly turned to myself and very directly stated that the OPP did not send 1,500 officers a day to his City as had been reported by the Solicitor General's Office. I explained that I actually collected that data and explained the 1,500 officer's number was the total members that had been deployed to Ottawa since the event began and the Solicitor General's Office staffer just penned a poorly worded sentence that left that impression. Chief Sloly became very stern and direct with me and while staring at me and in a raised voice, stated that I did not understand the politics of the Solicitor General's office and that release was no mistake. I advised I just sent the data and the Solicitor General's office did the media release.
- OPS MIC Supt Patterson then provided a supposed plan of action document that detailed the hard tactical operations planned for the next few days. His first event was a planned take down at 2300 hrs. that evening of the Rideau & Sussex intersection. I then asked very direct questions about his plan as the materials provided did not articulate anything. When asked how he planned to remove the trucks he advised that he could not get any tow trucks so he planned to use retired OPS members to drive the trucks out of there or possibly use Canadian Armed Forces Military tow trucks. I asked if a request for Aid to a civil power had been made to government [REDACTED] Prior to this meeting I had been receiving regular information from the PLT group that they were not being engaged in any planning and they had heard about a hard tactical action plan for Rideau and Sussex and were asking me to intervene as such a plan would further erode any forward progress

that PLT had been making. Knowing this, I asked Supt. Patterson if PLT was involved in the planning for the Rideau & Sussex operation and if they had agreed with such actions. Supt. Patterson paused before answering and then stated that PLT was aware and in agreement with the plan. This was the opposite of what I was being told by OPP PLT.

- We spoke about how police actions in Ottawa will have a Provincial and National impact so need to be measured and careful on the approach. Chief Sloly became intense again and in a raised voice stated that he did not want to hear about the rest of the Province or Country. He stated that the head of the hydra was here in Ottawa and if we take that out then it will solve all the Provincial and National problems.
- I asked further questions and advised that I was not an OPP POU Commander but based on what I had heard and seen from a planning perspective, I would not allow OPP POU members to participate in any form of take down at the Rideau and Sussex intersections that evening.
- RCMP Planners suggested to Chief Sloly that he pump the brakes as there is no real operational plan and look at making plans for action into next week and that would allow the RCMP to bring in as many as 400 POU members to assist. Chief Sloly became heated again and loud. He demanded that the RCMP promise that there would be 400 members on the ground next week and if that promise was not kept he would go to the Minister. RCMP advised that they need to get RCMP Command permission before promises can be made.
- When the meeting ended A/Deputy Chief Ferguson pulled me aside and thanked me for asking the pointed questions as they were the same questions she had been asking but was unable to get any answers. Deputy Chief Steve Bell also messaged me and thanked me for my honest input. He advised he appreciated it and felt it was very helpful.
- Later that evening I spoke with Chief Pardy and he advised that the OPP would move to deploying 120 officers a day from the previous 60 a day. I then prepared my team for the deployment of 128 OPP members a day and co-ordinated the deployment process with the EOC in a staged approach.
- On February 14th 2022 we scaled OPP support up to 150 members a day due to an increased need by OPS to cover traffic points and working towards providing 160 officers a day by the weekend.

- On February 15th 2022 I received a call from OPP Planner Brad Taylor who advised that we needed to pivot and prepare for the arrival of 400 more OPP members who would be on ground by Thursday February 17th 2022. I then stood up a reserve logistics team that had been already identified and tasked them with locating a larger Command Post and begin setting it up in preparation for having to put 230 OPP officers on ground per 12 hour shift. Almost 500 a day.
- On this day I also received an extensive message from OPP PLT stating that the National Framework was still not being followed and they were not being allowed to fully integrate with the OPS PLT teams. There still was no command structure and no ability to make decisions. The external political interference and deal making was making their job even more difficult.
- On February 16th 2022 I assisted with the movement into the new OPP Command Post in Ottawa. I spoke with the OPS Planners and they advised they wanted OPP members to do Quick Response Teams (QRT) and traffic points. They wanted the QRT's to be on 10 hour shifts, three shifts a day and the traffic points on 12 hour shifts. They wanted 100 OPP per shift on the QRT's to start February 16th 2022. As of 2024 hrs I still had not received the QRT and traffic point plans from the OPS as to where they wanted the OPP members for the next day. The plan was to transport OPP members down to the traffic points and QRT assignments in the coach buses that brought them. The coach bus drivers indicated that they needed 8 hours clear rest before driving again and after speaking to the bus company owner, he stood them down as he did not want his buses in the hostile area. We were then forced to partner with OC Transpo to arrange for transport of OPP members.
- On February 17th 2022, at 0700 hrs we deployed our first set of 100 OPP members out on QRT patrols and other members to traffic points. We had the next two QRT shifts scheduled. At 1230 hrs I was advised by OPP IC Insp. Chris McGillis that he had been directed by OPP MCIC Insp. Dave Springer to stop OPP QRT patrols and re-deploy those members to traffic points within what was going to be called "The Red Zone" to limit traffic into the downtown core. MCIC Springer wanted one officer, one cruiser at each intersection. I contacted MCIC Springer and indicated that there would be no lone officer deployments within the City of Ottawa. Intersection Control needed two officers one cruiser at least and likely more officers depending on the traffic volume as members would be stopping and checking cars to ensure they had a lawful purpose for traveling in that area. Conducting such a radical pivot in operations on such short notice had major logistical challenges in re-scheduling officers and then needing to use more OC Transpo buses to get them to their traffic points.

- On this same date I received a call from OPP Planner Brad Taylor. He was requesting I send four of my logistical staff over to RCMP HQ so they could assist OPS. He advised that OPS had over 100 Municipal Police Service members who wished to come and assist with police operations but the OPS did not have the ability to logistically arrange for their arrival, hotels etc. I sent four members to assist and Taylor advised that if we had not done that those Municipal Police members would have never made it in time to assist with the major police operation which was slated to occur the next day.
- That evening at approx. 2130 hrs a troop of 50 RCMP members attended the OPP Command Post. They advised that they had been told that RCMP and OPS members would now start being deployed from our CP location. We spoke to OPS members that were stationed at our CP and they stated that they did not know anything about this. If this was allowed to occur there would be close to 900 officers reporting at 0600 the next day for deployment on the morning of a major tactical operation where POU sections required uniform member support. We could never get 900 officers briefed and on the ground prior to the take down time. We worked with OPS to open their own CP back up and assisted them with moving their radios etc. to their Command Post.
- On February 18th 2022 the OC Transpo buses scheduled to attend to pick up OPP members from their dayshift traffic posts and deliver the night shift members never attended. As a logistics team, we operated smaller OC Transpo buses, vans and cars and delivered members to their posts and picked up dayshift officers. To ensure this never occurred again we inserted an OC Transpo Supervisor into our CP.
- On February 22st 2022 we entered a maintenance phase to control the area that the POU units had cleared over the weekend. OPP members remained on traffic point duties within a reduced "Red Zone" and began deploying 220 members a day, down from the previous 500 a day. We maintained this posture throughout that week with further reductions in the "Red Zone" occurring each day.
- On February 23rd 2022, in the late afternoon, the Prime Minister of Canada repealed the Emergencies Act. The "Red Zone" had been communicated to the public as being established as a result of the Emergencies Act coming into force. Now that the EA was gone members were unsure of their authorities to stop vehicles within the "Red Zone". [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] That evening the "Red Zone" was challenged 11 times by potential protesters in vehicles.

- On February 24th 2022 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] OPP members were directed to fall back into an observation posture.
- On February 27th 2022 OPP members performed their last shifts within the City of Ottawa.